

1. Apparatus for heating elongated food items, comprising:
a housing;

a first plurality of elongated rollers mounted for rotation
relative to said housing in a first roller tier and spaced apart to receive the
5 food items therebetween for contacting and transferring heat to the food
items during rotation of said first plurality of rollers; and

a second plurality of elongated rollers mounted for rotation
relative to said housing in a second roller tier spaced vertically apart from
said first roller tier and spaced apart to receive the food items therebetween
10 for contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said
second plurality of rollers.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first plurality of rollers
in said first roller tier lie in a substantially common first plane.

3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said second plurality of
rollers in said second roller tier lie in a substantially common second plane.

4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said first and second planes
are substantially parallel.

5. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said first and second planes
are upwardly inclined from a front toward a rear of said housing.

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6. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said first and second planes are substantially horizontally disposed.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a first heater control associated with said first plurality of rollers and operable to control heating of said first plurality of rollers to a predetermined temperature.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising a second heater control associated with said second plurality of rollers and operable to control heating of said second plurality of rollers to a predetermined temperature.

9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said first and second heater controls are independently controllable.

10. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a first drive mechanism associated with said first plurality of rollers and operable to rotate said first plurality of rollers.

11. The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a second drive mechanism associated with said second plurality of rollers and operable to rotate said second plurality of rollers.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said first and second drive mechanisms are independently controllable.

13. Apparatus for heating elongated food items, comprising:

a housing having a pair of spaced apart side walls;

a first plurality of elongated rollers mounted for rotation

between said side walls in a first roller tier and spaced apart to receive the

5 food items therebetween for contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said first plurality of rollers;

a second plurality of elongated rollers mounted for rotation

between said side walls in a second roller tier spaced vertically apart from

said first roller tier and spaced apart to receive the food items therebetween

10 for contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said second plurality of rollers; and

a third plurality of elongated rollers mounted for rotation

between said side walls in a third roller tier spaced vertically apart from said

first and second roller tiers and spaced apart to receive the food items

15 therebetween for contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said third plurality of rollers.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein at least one roller of said first roller tier overlies at least one roller of said second roller tier.

15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein at least one roller of said second roller tier overlies at least one roller of said third roller tier.

16. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said first plurality of rollers in said first roller tier lie in a substantially common first plane.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said second plurality of rollers in said second roller tier lie in a substantially common second plane.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said third plurality of rollers in said third roller tier lie in a substantially common third plane.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said first, second and third planes are substantially parallel.

20. Apparatus for heating elongated food items, comprising:
a housing; and
a plurality of elongated rollers mounted for rotation relative to
said housing and arranged into a plurality of vertically spaced apart roller
5 tiers and spaced apart to receive the food items therebetween for
contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said
plurality of rollers.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein a roller of one of said
plurality of roller tiers overlies a roller of another one of said plurality of
roller tiers.

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22. A method of heating elongated food items by contacting the food items with a plurality of rollers arranged into vertically spaced roller tiers, comprising:

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contacting the food items with the plurality of rollers;
rotating the plurality of rollers; and
applying heat to the plurality of rotating rollers to transfer heat to the food items.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of independently controlling the application of heat to the plurality of rollers in each vertically spaced roller tier.

24. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of independently controlling the rotation of the plurality of rollers in each vertically spaced roller tier.